

Sinclair broadcasting is acting in an irresponsible partisan manner when it forces preemption of news to the public to show an anti Kerry movie just before election time. This is the same company that ordered its ABC affiliates not to air Ted Koppel's Nightline tribute to fallen soldiers because it deemed it too partisan. This is the same company that together with its executives have given more than \$250,000 to national political parties and federal candidates since 1997, nearly all of it to Republicans. Sinclair's partisan actions don't represent the best interests of the viewing audience or its shareholders, who have seen their stock plummet in recent months. And given the proximity of the timing of the movie to Election Day and the reach of SBG owned stations, Sinclair's decision to air this documentary may also raise questions about whether this constitutes an illegal corporate gift to the Bush campaign.

Also troubling is the fact that Sinclair reportedly is giving its 62 stations no choice in whether to air the controversial documentary. This is one of the key flaws of concentrated media ownership: Sinclair, headquartered in Maryland, gets to dictate programming for communities in North Carolina, Ohio and Florida and across the United States.

While presenting political opinion is a right that we all have, using the power of the media to influence an election under the guise of news goes beyond the bounds of responsible media ownership and threatens democracy.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.

Ellen & Leonard Zablow